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SPECIAL REPORT

on Communist Propaganda

CUBAN AND OTHER COMMUNIST VIEWS OF CHILE:

ELEMENTS OF COMPETITION WITH THE CUBAN MODEL

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Against the background of Allende's frequent avowals of adherence to a nonintervention policy, there was a revealing emphasis on solidarity with other Latin American revolutionary movements in materials of the 23d congress of the Chilean Socialist Party which met 28-31 January. The congress passed a resolution of solidarity with Brazilian and Uruguayan revolutionaries which concluded that regardless of the outcome of the struggle in the two countries, these revolutionaries "will always find in Chile. 'asylum from oppression' and, in the Chilean Socialists, comrades in arms ready to give them solid support." At the same time, the conclave paid homage to Chileans who died fighting with the "Bolivian national Liberation army," the guerrilla organization founded by Guevara. Altamirano, following his election as Secretary General, was quoted in both Chilean and Cuban media as promising "determined support" to "all" Latin American revolutionary movements.

Havana media quoted the chief Cuban delegate to the Socialist Party congress. Central Committee member Emilio Aragones, as emphasizing in his speech the need for continuing solidarity with Latin American revolutionary movements. Reminding the Chileans that "very important battles for Latin American liberation" remain to be fought and "will demand great sacrifices from our brothers," Aragones called for closer solidarity with countries where revolutionary combatants are fighting domestic oligarchies and "v.s. imperialism." Thus from Havana as well as from elements within his own coalition, Allende may well be subjected in future to the argument that internal adherence to a nonintervention policy, in the event of the emergence of new guerrilla movements in neighboring countries, would constitute a betrayal of revolutionary principles.

II, CUBA, THE CHILEAN LEFT, AND THE ULTRA-LEFT

The course of MIR relations with the Allende regime could exert some influence on the Havana-Santiago relationship. While courting Allende, Cuba has hedged its bets by registering continued sympathy for Chile's Leftist Revolutionary Movement (MIR) which, despite current efforts at an accommodation with the new ruling coalition, subscribes to Cuban revolutionary nostrums and holds that violence will eventually be necessary if socialism is to triumph in Chile.

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In late September and early October--after the Chilean elections but before the 24 October congressional vote that put Allende in power--Allende and spokesmen for Popular Unity denied any link with the MIR, insisted they did not share MIR tactical positions, and disputed the MIR's right to "manage or advise" the coalition. In December an accommodation was reached between the regime and the MIR after Allende had freed MIR militants imprisoned by the Frei regime and credited the MIR with effectively "defending" the electoral victory by alerting Popular Unity forces to rightist conspiratorial activities. An accommodation was also reached between the MIR and its arch-enemy, the PCCh, whose spokesmen had frequently attacked it as an irresponsible group with a dangerous predilection for indiscriminate violence. But the persistence of a wide ideological gulf brings into question the permanence of the accommodation with the PCCh in particular.

CUBAN PUBLICITY FOR THE MIR

Havana media in December pictured a cordial relationship between the regime and the MIR, reporting Allende's release of MIR prisoners and noting, in the magazine BOHEMIA on 18 December, that Allende's personal guard included people "who had been actively sought by the Christian Democratic police as known members of the MIR." But Havana also publicized the MIR side of an exchange that took place over the MIR's role in fomenting illegal seizures of land by peasants in southern Chile, in the face of statements by Allende that he would "not tolerate" such actions. On 12 February Chilean Interior Minister Jose Toha delivered a speech condemning the illegal land seizures and pointing out that the government had submitted a bill to the congress providing "equal punishment for the instigators as well as the perpetrators of the occupation of agricultural land." Toha also condemned the existence of irregular armed groups "of any kind"--a statement aimed in part at the MIR and other extreme leftist groups which reportedly have maintained their organizations intact after Allende's victory. Toha's speech evoked a strong protest from the Revolutionary Peasant Movement (MCR), an organization under MIR influence which has been implicated in the forcible land seizures in southern Chile. Havana's PRENSA LATINA on 19 February reported a letter to Toha, said to have been drafted at a 12-14 February congress of the MCR, in which the interior minister was accused of pursuing an "antipopular policy."

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PRENSA LATINA's report noted the MCR position that the problems in the Chilean countryside basically stem from "the fact that the agrarian bourgeoisie hogs and monopolizes the land and exploits the work of the laborers on the fields, and that is why they cannot continue to wait--they urgently need bread, land, work, and socialism." The Cuban report also cited the MCR's denunciation of the existing agrarian reform law as "a bourgeois law 'that represents or defends not the interests of the men of the countryside but those of a fraction of the bourgeoisie,'" as well as the MCR's conclusion that "all the poor in Chile, all the poor in the countryside, and the government itself" must "foster a new agrarian reform law completely different from the present one." The new law, it said, must be "a tool in the class struggle that will allow us to destroy the power of the agrarian bourgeoisie and begin creating a worker-peasant power in the countryside."

Cuban media apparently did not, however, publicize more inflammatory expressions of the MCR activists' position in a statement passed at their congress--reported by PRENSA LATINA's correspondent in Santiago In an information dispatch to his home office--to the effect that "if the farmers are taking over large estates, it is because the law cannot resolve the farmers' problems" and that "if the law is not good, . . . we farmers will seek our own solution to our problems." The statement also indicated that an acceptable new law "could not be expected to come from the congress" and described such a law as one that would provide for "immediate expropriation" of all property of "the agrarian bourgeoisie," with "no exceptions" and "no indemnity . . . except for humane reasons. "

More recently, PRENSA LATINA on 3 March reported remarks by Allende the preceding day urging restraint on the part of "hasty revolutionaries" who advocate land seizures. PRENSA LATINA's report included Allende's reference to exemplary restraint shown by the Chilean ultraleft's own ideological mentors in Havana and Peking--the former with respect to the Guantanamo naval base and the latter with respect to Taiwan.

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THE MIR AND THE PCCH

While the Altamirano faction of Allende's Socialist Party and the Socialist Party youth organization have long had close links with the MIR, the PCCh and the MIR have long been outspoken antagonists. The PCCh and its Soviet patrons are on record with condemnations of the MIR, both before and after Allende's election, as an "ultraleft" group whose provocative actions were playing into the hands of the Chilean right wing. On 14 October Radio Moscow charged in a commentary for Latin American audiences that the MIR had "asked Chileans to vote against Allende" and was being praised in the "rightist press" because it was creating the kind of "unstable situation" in Chile that "the reactionaries want." Popular Unity leaders, the broadcast said, regarded MIR actions as "open treason, a blow behind the backs of the people," Prior to the election, the August 1970 issue of PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM, in an article attacking the Chilean Castroite publication PUNTO FINAL, excoriated the MIR as an organization consisting of "terrorists, renegades, and declassed elements armed with handgrenades and pistols, whose robbery raids are euphemistically called 'expropriations.'" It noted that the MIR "pseudorevolutionaries" oppose elections "while seeking to set up a 'revolutionary front' to range it against Popular Unity and ultimately to split the leftwing coalition."

The PCCh and the MIR reportedly arrived at a modus vivendi in December after a communist youth shot an MIR youth--who later died--in the course of a violent confrontation at Concepcion University. Neither side, however, has abandoned its traditional ideological stance. At the same time, while Havana and the PCCh apparently achieved a rapprochement of sorts after Communist. Senator Volodia Teitelboim visited Cuba last June, fundamental divergencies remain that are akin to those that still divide the PCCh and the MIR.

Although PCCh spokesmen have gone out of their way to be cordial toward Cuba, even crediting Havana with making a major contribution to Allende's victory, overtones of the continuing ideological differences could be seen, for example, in Teitelboim's speech at the 20th congress of the Uruguayan Communist Party, reported in that party's

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organ EL POPULAR on 14 December. The Chilean Communist Senator rebutted unnamed "critics of the communist movement" who maintain that it is impossible to gain power except by force of arms. While granting that this might be a valid proposition for "some countries," he said that "the error lies in making it an absolute, converting it into obligatory general dogma." To do that, Teitelboim argued, is to adhere "to schemes of the past, . . . to the petrifying, mummifying standard that nothing can be which has not already been." In an oblique admonition of Havana, he concluded that it was up to the revolutionaries of each country to determine "the characteristics of their own revolution." Yet in a speech at a 3 January ceremony marking the 12th anniversary of the Cuban revolution, Teitelboim declared that the Popular Unity triumph would have been "absolutely inconceivable" without the prior triumph of the Cuban revolution.

Thus the PCCh on the one hand pays lip service to the Cuban revolution as the catalyst of revolutionary change in Latin America, while on the other hand it conveys dissent from Cubanténets on revolutionary strategy and pursues what is essentially the Soviet line on diversity and flexibility, with each party entitled to chart its own path.

Cuban media have refrained from criticizing the PCCh since mid-1970 while sporadically airing the views of the MIR--without, however, supporting the MIR in original comment. Havana media's sanitized account of remarks by Carlos Rafael Rodriguez at his 11 November press conference in Chile did not include comments in defense of the MIR, elicited by a provocative question from a reporter for the PCCh organ EL SIGLO on whether the MIR was not trying to achieve socialism too fast.* According to the text of Rodriguez!

* As reported in a dispatch from PRENSA LATINA's Santiago correspondent to the Havana home office, Rodriguez took the occasion earlier in the press conference to remark that Chile might well benefit from some of Cuba's "negative experiences" and specifically warned against permitting "anguish or impatience over meeting the people's needs" to result in efforts "to accomplish more than the technical, political, and economic resources allow at a given moment." It was these remarks--not carried in Havana media--that apparently prompted the provocative question from the PCCh reporter.

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remarks transmitted by the PRENSA LATINA correspondent to his Havana home office, Rodriguez said:

Everything that has taken place in Chile from before the elections until now, through the MIR statements and discussions with persons close to the MIR, makes me believe that the entire MIR has cooperated with its official position--in spite of having a thesis different from that of Popular Unity--favoring the Popular Unity. That is, the MIR believed that at a certain time it was necessary and expedient to stop the armed struggle to give the Popular Unity a chance to accomplish what it is attempting to do. That is what I think the MIR did--what I think the MIR has done since then. Naturally, what they are going to do, if my answer proves correct, I could not say.

III, POLITICAL DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

If Castro recognizes in his new potential socialist ally a competitive model of how to achieve revolutionary power in Latin America, he also has grounds for concern lest the existence of a quasisocialist regime under Allende, successful in maintaining at least some of the bases of Chile's democratic system and in achieving its economic goals, invite invidious comparison with his own performance in both the political and economic spheres and tarnish the luster of the Cuban model in the eyes of Latin American leftists. Anticipation of this possibility is already apparent in statements by Castro and Rodriguez;

Sensitivity to the prospect of Allende's regime bringing into sharpened focus the absence of democratic freedoms in Cuba was displayed by Rodriguez in remarks over Chilean TV on 9 November, when he bristled at a reporter's question about the lack of elections and freedom of the press under Cuba's "authoritarian" system. Defensively, he retorted that Chile, under its vaunted "system of public freedoms," had witnessed "the assassination of miners on strike" when Frei was in power. Declaring that Cuba had "other concepts of public freedoms and democracy," he added: "You speak of an authoritarian regime. I would ask, authoritarian of whom . . . , for whom, and with whom?" He remarked that if the Cuban people were asked about their "system of freedoms," their replies "would be very different from what was implied" in the reporter's question. When the reporter pressed Rodriguez to explain why

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